

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5484



Introduced by the Representative Ruby M. Sahali

AN ACT STRENGTHENING LOCALLY MANAGED CONSERVATION
AREAS IN THE PHILIPPINES, ADOPTING BUD BONGAO LOCAL
CONSERVATION AREA AS PILOT SITE AND OTHER PURPOSES
THEREOF; INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR ITS
IMPLEMENTATION.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Local management is an increasingly relevant management framework approach in conservation. It empowers and capacitates multi-stakeholders in the community to have the full control in steering forward community-based efforts in the preservation and conservation of a specifically identified natural resource within the coverage area of the community. Local management ensures the sustainability and continuity of the conservation effort because the people themselves take ownership. It is designed to complement and support established legislation frameworks such as the NIPAS ACT of 1992 for the protection and management of the country's natural resources.

Examples of these conservation efforts were the New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project (NewCAPP) and Strengthening the Management of Bud Bongao Local Conservation Area (BBLCA).

The NewCAPP was a 5-year collaboration between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (formerly the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau or PAWB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines (WWF-Philippines), locally known as KabangKalikasan ng Pilipinas Foundation, Inc. (KKPFI) was the Local Responsible Partner for TawiTawi site of the Project

The project was able to map out the boundaries for Bud Bongao and Bud Kabugan and identified the former as a conservation area while the later as a production area. A

Biodiversity Assessment, together with Policy and Land Information; Socio-Economic and Institutional Assessment; and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) framework were also created. These studies and assessments served as basis for 4 major outcomes—the formulation and adoption of the Bud Bongao Management Plan; the declaration of Bud Bongao as a locally managed conservation area; the declaration of March 1 as Bud Bongao Day and the creation of the Bud Bongao Management Council (BBMC).

Strengthening the management of the BBLCA was a project supported by The Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation (PTFCF) and is also implemented by WWF-Philippines/ KKPFI. The project enabled the BBMC to manage the conservation area by strengthening its capacity. The major outcomes were the creation and adoption of an operations manual for the council members; installation of boundary markers in the conservation area and mobilization of community volunteers in the conduct of activities aimed at raising awareness on BBLCA importance; the role of BBMC and the establishment of a tree nursery near the entry point going to the peak.

The BBLCA was declared a Local Conservation Area (LCA) under the Municipal Ordinance Number 202 Series of 2013 and is the first LCA in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It is a collaborative effort of multi-sectoral partnerships in Tawi-Tawi with the Bongao Local Government Unit, and the good people of Bongao, Tawi-Tawi playing a substantive role for sustainable development.

The BBLCA is currently being locally managed under the flagship of the Bud Bongao Management Council (BBMC), a multi-sectoral stakeholders in Tawi-Tawi composed of the local government unit, people's organizations, line agencies, traditional and spiritual leaders, non-government organizations, the youth, and the Barangay residents covered by the area of conservation.

Bud Bongao has been locally declared an area for conservation in the Province of Tawi-Tawi because it is one of the remaining moist forests in the Philippines. It is home to endemic flora and fauna, and for its spiritual significance to the people of the Sulu Archipelago. The increasing threats of human activities due to the increasing population of the Municipality of Bongao have raised the urgency for the protection and conservation of this forest patches in Bud Bongao.

There are several locally-managed conservation areas in the country, the need to strengthen these locally managed conservation areas of forest patches and other natural resources is an indispensable key to ensuring continuity and sustainability of community-based efforts in ensuring the future of the future generation.



RUBY M. SAHALI

Lone District, Tawi-Tawi

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1: Title – This shall be known as “Locally Managed Conservation Areas” Act.

SECTION 2: Declaration of Policy – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to support, complement, and strengthen locally managed conservation efforts in communities, for the protection and conservation of forest patches and other natural resources; to protect and preserve the culture and traditions of indigenous people; and ensure its continuity and sustainability.

SECTION 3: Scope – This Act shall cover all locally managed conservation areas in the Philippines, adopting Bud Bongao Local Conservation Area as Pilot Site.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms –For purpose of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- (a) **“Bud Bongao Management Council” (BBMC)** refers to the community of multi-sectoral stakeholders in Tawi-Tawi managing the Bud Bongao Local Conservation Area;

- (b) **"Bud Bongao Local Conservation Area"** (BBLCA) refers to the conservation area in the Municipality of Bongao, Province of Tawi-Tawi, the pilot site for this Act;
- (c) **"Local Conservation Area"** (LCA) refers to identified portions of land and/or water set aside for their ecological, natural values, cultural and traditional significance to the locality;
- (d) **"Local Management Council"** (LMC) refers to the multi-sectoral stakeholders who will ensure the realization of a Local Conservation Area's mission and vision, mandate and objectives;
- (e) **Locally-Managed Conservation Area** refers to conservation areas where different sectors of the communities are involved through collaborative and participative process, in ensuring effective management and conservation of the habitat, flora and fauna of conservation areas so they can continue to provide ecosystems goods and services to the people.

SECTION 5. *Adoption of Bud Bongao Local Conservation Area as Pilot Site.* Bud Bongao having been the first local conservation area to be declared in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and having demonstrated an effective management of LCA through collaborative efforts of different sectors in the community, is hereby recognized as the pilot site for the strengthening of other LCAs in the Philippines. As pilot site, the measures taken in the management, conservation and protection of Bud Bongao shall serve as model for the strengthening of other LCAs in the country.

SECTION 5. *Creation of the Joint Management Coordination Committee.* The provincial government where the LCA is situated shall create and mobilize a Joint Management Coordination Committee (JMCC). The JMCC is an advisory body and shall have the primary role to provide guidance for the overall strategic direction to the LCAMC in carrying out project and activities pertaining to conservation and protection of conservation areas. It shall also provide guidance in project planning, resource mobilization and building linkages with other LCAMC.

The JMCC shall be composed of Vice Governor as Chair of the Committee; DENR PAWB, DENR PENRO, Provincial Planning Development Officer, PNP Provincial Office, Provincial Tourism Officer, Academe, Research Institutions, Business Sector, as members. The members of the JMCC shall have a term of four (4) years.

SECTION 7. *Creation of Local Conservation Area Management Council.* Local government units that have adopted local conservation areas shall create, through an ordinance, local conservation area management council (LCAMC). The LCAMC shall be tasked to formulate policies for the sustainable development and conservation, management, protection and utilization of the natural resources of all the conservation areas within the jurisdiction of the local government. The LCAMC shall have four regular meetings each year, or one meeting every quarter,

The LCAMC shall be composed of the following:

- a) Chairman: Mayor
- b) Vice Chairman: Vice Mayor
- c) Members: SB Committee on Health and Environment
 - SB Committee on Tourism
 - SB Committee on Appropriation and Budget
 - City/Municipal Planning Development Coordinator (MPDC)
 - C/MENRO-DENR
 - Chairs of Barangays covered by the Conservation Area
 - Accredited CSO (Local People's Organization)
 - Religious Sector or Traditional Leader whose territory or portion is included in the conservation area
 - Accredited Environmental Non-Government Organization
 - Chief of Police
 - Appropriate branch of Armed Forces of the Philippines

A member from local people's organization and environmental NGO who shall be appointed as members of LCAMC shall be endorsed by heads of organizations, and shall have a term of 4 years.

An environmental non-government organization shall be preferably based in the area or has established and recognized interest in the conservation area, and shall have a term of 4 years.

SECTION 7. *Duties and Functions of the LCAMC.* The LCAMC shall have the following duties and functions

- a) Decide on matters relating to planning, administration, protection and enforcement in the LCA
- b) Formulate specific policies and guidelines for the management of the LCA;
- c) Approve proposals, work plans, action plans and guidelines for the management of the LCA;
- d) Prepare and submit annual program of actions, proposed budget, progress and monitoring reports to the Sangguniang Bayan and Office of the Mayor;
- e) Promulgate rules and regulations to promote development programs on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development consistent with the plan; and
- f) Serve as a forum to regularly review, evaluate and resolve issues of significance affecting the LCA.

SECTION 8: *Creation of Local Conservation Area Office.* Within two (2) years after the creation of LCAMC and JMCC, a local conservation area shall be established.

A LCA Management Office (LCAMO) shall be created to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Conservation Area. Its functions shall be defined in the LCA Management Plan.

The staff of the LCA Management shall serve as the regular professional and technical staff of the LCA Management Office who shall provide the machinery to coordinate the policy and functions, implement programs, and organize services as required by the Council in the governance, implementation, and policy direction.

A. The LCA Management Office shall have following duties and functions:

1. Serve as the secretariat of the council;
2. Implement the management plan;
3. Coordinate with and ensure the participation of government agencies, NGOs, local communities, religious leaders, private sector and other groups in the conduct of activities related to the conservation area;
4. Develop proposals for funding of external institutions for special activities such as research, capability strengthening, community support generation and support infrastructure;
5. Enforce all the policies and regulations promulgated by the LCAMC;
6. Monitor the activities and operation of the park in conformity with the management plan.

Section 9: Acknowledgement – The original proponents of the pertinent documents including but not limited to the Manual of Operation of the Bud Bongao Local Conservation Area, The Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation (PTFCF), WWF-Philippines/ KKPFI and the Bud Bongao Management Council shall be properly acknowledged.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations – Within one hundred eighty (180) days upon the effectivity of this Act, the Implementing Rules and Regulations shall be developed and formulated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Interior and Local Government, and at least five (5) representatives from the Civic Society Organizations and People's Organizations, with technical assistance from non-government organizations.

SECTION 11. *Appropriations* – Funding for the implementation of this Act, shall be included in the annual General Appropriation Act (GAA) of the Provincial Government.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause*- If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the other parts of sections hereof.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause – All laws, presidential decrees, executives, or rules and regulations inconsistent with any provision of this Act be deemed or modifies accordingly.

SECTION 14. Effectivity Clause- This shall effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

